

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

ACDA-10 SAJ-01 SAM-01 /089 W

----- 121245

R 251530Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6724

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

US MISSION USUN 3791

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS CAIRO 9571

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, EG, XF

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN PRESS TREATMENT OF WITHDRAWAL TIMETABLE

REF: CAIRO 9521

1. SUMMARY: EGYPTIAN NEWSPAPERS SEPTEMBER 25 LEAD WITH REPORTS DRAWN FROM ISRAELI PRESS ON DETAILED TIMETABLE FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, STRESSING TURNOVER OF FIELDS AT RAS SUDR SHOULD BEGIN OCTOBER 5. AKHBAR EDITORIAL EMPHASIZES EGYPT EXPECTS TIMETABLE TO BE MET AND THAT ISRAELI DECISION TO INITIAL, RATHER THAN SIGN, AT GENEVA IN NO WAY AFFECTS THE SCHEDULE. "ISRAEL MUST BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY DELAYS." END SUMMARY.

2. EGYPTIAN PRESS SEPTEMBER 25 FEATURES STORIES ON TIMETABLE FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, INCLUDING ARTICLES ATTRIBUTED TO NEWS AGENCIES IN ISRAEL AND JERUSALEM POST.

3. EGYPTIAN COVERAGE STATES THAT FIRST EGYPTIAN TECHNICIANS ARE SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN NORTHERN SUDR OIL FIELDS ON OCTOBER 5, AND THAT ALL ISRAELIS, MILITARY AND CIVILIANS, ARE TO BE OUT OF THESE FIELDS BY NOVEMBER 15. JERUSALEM POST ARTICLE QUOTES ZAFAI DINSTEIN, ISRAELI PRIMIN'S ADVISOR ON UNCLASSIFIED

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PETROLEUM AFFAIRS, THAT ITALIAN ENGINEERS FROM ENI WILL BE

TAKING OVER THE FIELDS "AFTER TWO WEEKS" IN ORDER TO HAND THEM OVER EVENTUALLY TO EGYPTIANS. ACCORDING TO DINSTEIN, ISRAELIS ARE PLEDGED TO RETURN OIL FIELDS IN RUNNING ORDER AND NOT TO WITHDRAW ANY EQUIPMENT EXCEPT COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDICAL GEAR AND MOVABLE PROPERTY (ARABIC: "MANQULAT"). ACCORDING TO THE UERUSALEM POST ARTICLE, ISRAELI MILITARY FORCES ARE PLEDGED TO WITHDRAW FROM SUDR AREA ON NOVEMBER 15 AFTER HANDING CONTROL OVER TO UN FORCES WHO WILL HAND OVER TO EGYPTIANS.

4. ARTICLES STATE THAT EGYPTIAN TECHNICIANS WILL ENTER ABU RUDEIS OIL FIELDS ON NOVEMBER 24, ISRAELI TROOPS ARE REPORTEDLY SCHEDULED TO WITHDRAW ON NOVEMBER 30 AND EGYPTIANS TO CLAIM SOVEREIGNTY ON DECEMBER 1. (COMMENT: NO MENTION IS MADE AS TO WHETHER ITALIAN TECHNICIANS WILL ALSO BE INVOLVED IN THIS TRANSFER.)

5. PAPERS REPORT THAT ISRAELIS WILL WITHDRAW FROM NORTHERN SINAI IN SIX STAGES BEGINNING JANUARY 13, 1976, AND TERMINATING FEBRUARY 21, 1976. THE PAPERS COMMENT, AGAIN CITING ISRAELI SOURCES, THAT, IN ALL, 1900 SQUARE MILES OF TERRITORY ARE TO CHANGE HANDS.

6. PAPERS COMMENT THAT ISRAEL MUST WITHDRAW BEHIND ITS NEW WESTERN LINE BEFORE FEBRUARY 22, BECAUSE THIS DATE FALLS EXACTLY FIVE MONTHS AFTER "SIGNING" OF THE AGREEMENT IN GENEVA. HOWEVER, BURIED IN THE ARTICLES, ARE COMMENTS BY ISRAELI SOURCES THAT, IF THE US CONGRESS DELAYS IN AUTHORIZING AMERICAN TECHNICIANS, THERE WILL BE A NEED TO REVISE ENTIRE SCHEDULE OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS IN SINAI.

7. ASSOCIATED PRESS DISPTACH FROM TEL AVIV, STATING THAT AGREEMENT WHICH EMERGED FROM GENEVA HAS SIX ARTICLES, IS ALSO CITED. ACCORDING TO AP, FIRST ARTICLE DEALS WITH TIMETABLE MENTIONED ABOVE. SECOND ARTICLE DEALS WITH ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE USE OF THE CORRIDOR LEADING TO ABU RUDEIS. ACCORDING TO THIS ARTICLE, EGYPT IS TO BE ALLOWED A FORCE OF 700 POLICE AND 2000 CIVILIANS IN THE CORRIDOR AREA. THIRD ARTICLE DEALS WITH FACT THAT ROADWAY IN THE ABU RUDEIS CORRIDOR IS TO BE SHARED, BECAUSE ROADWAY IN ONLY MEANS FOR ISRAELIS TO SUPPLY THEIR TROOPS
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FARTHER SOUTH. FOURTH ARTICLE DEALS WITH STEPS TO DEFINE AREA TO BE OCCUPIED BY EARLY WARNING STATIONS IN DEMILITARIZED ZONE. FIFTH ARTICLE STATES THAT BOTH EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELIS WILL BE ALLOWED UP TO SEVEN WEEKLY RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS, WHICH WILL BE PERMITTED TO ADVANCE UP TO THE BORDERS OF EGYPTIAN OR ISRAELI TERRITORY AND THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE. LAST ARTICLE CALLS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI MILITARY COMMITTEE, HEADED BY THE CHIEF OF THE UN FORCES IN THE AREA, WHICH WILL

SUPERVISE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.

7. AKHBAR EDITORIAL DECLARES THAT ALTHOUGH ISRAELIS ONLY INITIALLED, "ON PRETEXT OF WAITING FOR US CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF SENDING TECHNICIANS FOR MONITORING STATIONS," THAT FACT CONCERNS ONLY ISRAEL AND DOES NOT RPT NOT IN THE LEAST AFFECT WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE AGREED IN PROTOCOL. GOE POSITION ON THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN CLEAR FROM BEGINNING OF TALKS WITH SECRETARY. THUS IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION IS CORRECT CHOURSE AND "ISRAEL MUST BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY DELAYS." FURTHERMORE, SINCE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL IS FOREGONE CONCLUSION, THIS SHOULD REMOVE ANOTHER CAUSE FOR ANY ISRAELI DELAY.

8. EDITORIALS IN BOTH AKHBAR AND AHRAM REMARK UPON SIGNIFICANCE OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. AKHBAR IS PLEASE THAT CONFIDENCE WILL BE GENERATED IN STEPS TOWARD DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL ME SETTLEMENT. AHRAM, SPEAKING TO ARAB CRITICISM OF SINAI II, NOTES ISRAELI WITHDRWAL PROVIDES TANGIBLE PROOF THAT EGYPT IS MOVING FORWARD TO REGAIN ARAB LAND.

9. COMMENT: NO MENTION IS MADE OF TIMETABLE FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS OR FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EARLY WARNING STATIONS. TONE OF THE ARTICLES IS GENERALLY MATTER OF FACT, WITH STRESS UPON FACT THAT TURN OVER OF THE SUDR FIELDS IS TO BEGIN OCTOBER 5.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, TROOP DEPLOYMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CAIRO09571
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750333-0759
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750915/aaaaamj.tel
Line Count: 142
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 CAIRO 9521
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2003 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <04 FEB 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGYPTIAN PRESS TREATMENT OF WITHDRAWAL TIMETABLE
TAGS: PFOR, EG, XF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006